



CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The *Cooperative Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* for the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is the product of a collaboration of the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources, the National Park Service, and the public. Consultation and coordination among the agencies and the public were vitally important throughout the planning process. The public had two primary avenues by which it participated in the development of the plan — participation in the Lower St. Croix Planning Task Force and responses to newsletters and workbooks.

LOWER ST. CROIX PLANNING TASK FORCE

The task force was established in February 1996 to guide the development of the cooperative management plan, facilitate participation of riverway stakeholders and the public in the planning process, provide feedback on the three riverway management agencies' work, and help build stakeholder consensus on the future management of the riverway. Membership of the task force was open throughout the planning process to all interested citizens. Attendees at the task force meetings included staff of the riverway management agencies, interested individuals, and citizens representing boaters, businesses, landowners, environmental groups, local governments, and various other groups. A diversity of interests was always present. Attendance at meetings was usually between 30 and 50, although some meetings had over 200 in attendance. Notices of task force meetings were sent to 53 people on

the task force mailing list, 78 other individuals, 56 interagency contacts, 112 individuals in local government, and the media. All meetings were advertised and open to the public.

Between February 1996 and August 1998 the task force met 53 times. Some of these meetings were informational, intended to educate task force members, while others were workshops where the task force worked on specific topics and developed recommendations. All of the task force's recommendations for the cooperative management plan were developed through consensus.

The task force held a workshop in April 1996 to formulate preliminary statements on the lower St. Croix's purposes, significance, and exceptional resources and values. Meetings were then held through the summer of 1996 to discuss various issues and concerns regarding future use and management of the lower riverway. Issues that were covered included such topics as river crossings, vegetative cover, water quality, land protection, and recreation.

In September 1996 a workshop was held to begin identifying the range of experiences and resources conditions for which the lower riverway could be managed. This information, along with information from the April workshop and from the summer meetings was used to develop management areas.

In January 1997 the task force held a third workshop to develop management alternatives for the lower riverway. The task force agreed to an overall vision that described

what the riverway ideally would look like in 20 years. Based on the riverway's resources and uses, and differing views regarding the future use and management of the lower riverway, the task force identified preliminary alternative management concepts. A series of meetings were then held through the winter and summer of 1997 to provide more detail on specific topics such as riverway crossings and to identify actions that were common to all of the alternatives.

In the summer of 1997 the task force examined different organizational structures for managing the land and water surface. From September through November 1997 the task force turned its attention to developing guidelines for revising the states' regulations on land and water surface uses.

In the winter of 1997-1998 the task force concentrated on refining the management alternatives for the lower riverway. Using information generated at earlier meetings, the alternatives were revised and clarified.

Beginning with a two-day workshop in April 1998, the task force held seven meetings attempting to reach agreement on a preferred alternative for managing the lower riverway and on the guidelines for revising the states' regulations. Unresolved issues were forwarded to the Lower St. Croix Management Commission. On August 10, 1998, the management commission met with the task force and resolved these outstanding issues for the preferred alternative.

NEWSLETTERS AND WORKBOOKS

Newsletters and workbooks were the other avenue used to keep the public informed

about and involved in the planning process for the lower St. Croix. A mailing list consisting of 685 names was compiled during the planning process. This mailing list included members of the planning team from the three riverway management agencies (12), other governmental agencies (75) [combined interagency team + other agencies], nongovernmental groups/ nonprofit organizations (57), businesses and commercial interests (143), legislators (22), local governments (112), and interested citizens (264).

During the course of the planning process two newsletters and three workbooks were published and mailed to the public. In May 1996, the first planning newsletter was published, alerting people that the planning process was beginning. Newsletter #1 included the draft purpose, significance, and exceptional resource/value statements, and asked for public comments on these statements, on desired futures, and on issues the plan should address. About 430 newsletters were distributed and 23 separate responses were mailed back along with four letters from individuals who voiced opinions about what should be addressed in the plan. Most people who responded supported or did not disagree with the draft purpose, significance, and exceptional resource/value statements. Most respondents also had similar desires for the future of the lower riverway. Many wanted to see the riverway remain as it is today, wanted new development to be minimized, and the small-town flavor of the river communities to be maintained. There were widely differing views on boating, with some wanting less motorized boat traffic and/or more restrictions, and others wanting fewer restrictions on boating and more opportunities for access.

Newsletter #2, published in November 1996, summarized the response to the May newsletter and identified changes that were made in the purpose, significance, and exceptional resource/value statements based on the public's comments. The newsletter also identified the issues and concerns that would be addressed by the cooperative management plan, described landscape units of the lower St. Croix, and described the activities of the task force. No response form was included in the newsletter.

In April 1997 an alternatives workbook was published. The workbook included the descriptions of potential land and water management areas, and five preliminary management alternatives, plus a "no action" alternative. A vision for the lower riverway also was presented. A response form was included in the workbook, asking the public to comment on the vision statement and the management alternatives. Fifty-three responses were received on the workbook. Some of the respondents felt that conditions were fine and no changes were needed regarding land use regulation, while some felt that additional restrictions were needed to ensure that conditions stay the way they are now. Landowners wanted less regulation on their private property. There was a notable lack of discussion about river use conflicts among those who responded to the workbook.

Workbook #2, published in April 1998, was intended to compile the existing products of the task force and serve as a reference tool for participants at the preferred alternative workshop. No response form was included in this workbook.

Workbook #3, also published in April 1998, focused on the guidelines for revising the state land use and surface water use regulations. The workbook included summary matrices describing the preferred alternative and guideline comparison matrices. The public was asked to indicate its support for different options being considered by the task force and the rationale for supporting the option. Approximately 125 written responses were received on the options.

CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICES AND THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (16 USC 470, et seq.) requires that federal agencies that have direct or indirect interest jurisdiction take into account the effect of undertakings on national register properties and allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment. Toward that end the National Park Service would work with the Minnesota and Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Offices and the advisory council to meet requirements of 36 CFR 800. Both state historic preservation offices were invited to participate in the planning process, and each had an opportunity to review and comment on the draft document. In addition to federal agency consultation, the state riverway managing agencies will also consult with the SHPOs as appropriate, and as directed by state statute and rule.

CONSULTATION WITH AMERICAN INDIANS

Consultation with American Indian groups who historically occupied the area of the riverway was initiated during the planning process. Two Ojibway Bands (the St. Croix Band and the Mille Lacs Band), the Prairie Island Community of Dakota, and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission were invited to participate in this planning effort. All planning task force mailings and newsletters have been sent to the tribes. The Minnesota Indian Affairs Council and Mille Lacs Band presented information at a task force meeting concerning the cultural significance of the St. Croix valley to American Indians. Conversations have been ongoing throughout the planning process to inform the tribes about the progress of the plan and identify how and to what extent they would like to be involved. The tribes will also have the opportunity to review and comment on this draft plan.

CONSULTATION WITH THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began in May 1995 with a request for a list of endangered and threatened species that may occur in or near the lower riverway. A response dated July 1995 was received. An updated list was requested in April 1997 and a response dated June 1997 was received and is included in appendix D. The National Park Service initiated formal consultation pursuant to the Endangered Species Act with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding management directions that may adversely affect the federally endangered Higgins' eye mussel and the winged

mapleleaf mussel. The biological opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is included in appendix D of this *Final Environmental Impact Statement*.

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

The *Draft Cooperative Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* for the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway was released to the public on September 17, 1999. The public comment period ended November 30, 1999. Approximately 650 copies of the document were distributed to federal and state officials and agencies, local governments, organizations, individuals, and public libraries. The document was also available for review on the internet. Informational open houses were held in Hudson, Wisconsin, on October 25 and in Stillwater, Minnesota, on October 26. The purpose of the open houses was to discuss and answer questions about the document and solicit written comments concerning the plan.

The managing agencies received almost 900 written responses during the public review period, including written letters, e-mail comments, form cards, and comment forms that were either filled out and submitted at the open houses or mailed in. Of these responses, 37 were from agencies, organizations, and businesses, including one federal agency, four state agencies, two regional and interstate agencies, 10 local agencies and governments, and 20 organizations and business interests. Responses were also received from about 850 individuals, including approximately 600 form cards. Almost all of the form cards supported Alternative E, no action. The majority of the other responses did not say which alternative they favored. Of those

that did, approximately an equal number, around 30, expressed support for the preferred alternative or alternative D, about half as many supported alternative E, and only a couple individuals supported alternatives A or C.

Comment letters from all agencies, governments, organizations, and businesses are reproduced. Responses are provided to substantive comments questioning supporting information or environmental analysis, comments recommending actions or alternatives beyond the range of alternatives in the draft plan, comments that caused changes or revisions in the preferred alternative, or comments requesting clarification of the draft. No response was given to comments simply expressing preference for an alternative. Because of the volume of written comments received, only individuals' letters that contained comments not covered by the agency and organization letters have been printed and are listed below. Where appropriate, the text in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement* has been revised to address the comments. These changes are identified in the managing agencies' responses.

Federal Agencies

Environmental Protection Agency

Regional Agencies

Metropolitan Council
Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area
Commission

State Agencies

Minnesota Department of Transportation
Minnesota Historical Society
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Local Agencies

City of Afton
City of Bayport
City of Lake St. Croix Beach
City of Marine on St. Croix
City of Prescott
City of Stillwater
Village of Osceola
Pierce County
St. Croix County
Washington County

Organizations and Businesses

Andersen Corporation
Beanies
Carpenter Nature Center
Cedar St. Croix Landowners Association
Thousand Friends of Minnesota
Empson Archives
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter
Northern States Power Company
Port of Sunnyside
Riverway Consensus Standard
Sierra Club
St. Croix River Marina Managers
St. Croix River Association
St. Croix Waterways Association
Steamboat Inn
Stillwater Heritage Preservation
Commission
Upper Mississippi Waterway Association
Wildlaw
Wolf Marine, Inc.
Citizens for Responsible Zoning and
Landowner Rights

Individuals

Larry Wolf
Gene Anderson
Dennis O'Donnell
Clarence Nelson
Bill and Sharon Clapp
Kathryn M. Nelson